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Collaboration in Musical Theatre Writing

Presented to Pace University School of Performing Arts

By John Coyne

BFA Acting

Advised by Ryan Scott Oliver

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Abstract

Good musical theatre writing is generally assessed by how intentional it is in telling its story. Since it is a very difficult thing to tell a story using music, writers must exercise extreme caution in allowing a story to unfold in an effective, economic way. Recently, there has been a trend in theatre for projects to be developed in a way that utilizes less time of writers sitting alone in a room, and more time of material being developed on its feet. Devised theatre, as it is often called, is anathema to the traditional practices of musical theatre writing. The results of this project, the music and lyrics for a modern adaptation of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, shed light on musical theatre writing and its relationship to collaboration. Though the songs that were generated as a result of *Lysistrata* were often fraught with errors in terms of structure, rhyme, and meter, the artistic ambition contained in the songs was at least slightly commendable. If devising has a place in musical theatre writing, it is as a method of generating new material, not as a way of refining material with high standards.

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Introduction

The process of writing a musical is steeped in rich tradition. While the exact timeline and practices vary from project to project, there is an extensive set of steps that writers take to allow an idea to become a fully realized piece of musical theatre. Typically, a team of writers (or more rarely, a single writer) will spend weeks determining how they will tell their story, deciding all elements from genre of music to time period to narrative structure. After going through many rewrites of this initial phase, they may pitch their project to acquire financial backing, or they may go right into the writing of the piece. The writing typically consists of years of revisions to find the most economic and striking telling of the story the writer(s) can devise. This phase also incorporates a cycle of workshops, readings, and concerts to further the writing of and generate interest toward the musical. The writing does not stop there. When a musical gets its first production, there is even more editing. Entire songs may be cut during previews. Even when the first production is over, the rewriting continues as the writers incorporate what they have observed from the first production into future drafts. The more time the writers take with the work, the more they can expect their piece to expose meaningful truth.

On October 27th, 2017, a production of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* for which I wrote original music and lyrics opened at 3-Legged Dog Art and Technology Center. The process of writing this piece broke every thinkable convention, and I was left with no tradition to guide my decisions as a writer. I could only rely on my collaborators and my own intuition of effective storytelling. The bulk of the writing happened over the course of a mere three months, during which time I wrote around thirty minutes of music and lyrics, produced digitally orchestrated futuristic instrumentals for the songs and incidental music alike, music directed the piece,

collaborated with a team of designers to shape the aesthetic direction of the piece, and played a role as an actor. I cannot speak objectively toward the quality of the resulting piece of theatre, but I can speak to the challenges I faced and the lessons learned by working on it.

Cross-pollination between traditional musical theatre writing and the avant-garde theatre scene is nothing new, yet it is expanding now more than ever. In a world where unconventional musicals are seen as more and more commercially viable by the day, one must necessarily question the process by which musicals are conceived, and developed, and produced. My aim in this paper is to examine the process of working on this show through the lens of musical theatre writing as a constantly developing form. Which practices emerged from this unconventional process that will be useful to bring to projects in the future? To what degree should a writer be comfortable relinquishing control? Finally, this paper will serve as a guide to any writer who finds themselves in a position where they must condense a process that typically takes years into a number of months.

Methodology

The way I approach writing songs for story comes directly from *Story: Style, Structure, Substance, and the Principles of Screenwriting* by Robert McKee. McKee's approach to story is rooted in what he calls Story Values; "Story Values are the universal qualities of human experience that may shift from positive to negative, negative to positive, from one moment to the next." (McKee 34) Examples of effective Story Values include maturity, stability, fame, freedom, pride, and any other virtue a character may pursue for the duration of a story. According to McKee's framework, every moment in a story must affect the primary Story Value. In a story whose Story Value is stability, for example, the protagonist deciding to abandon her family and move to India would certainly make stability decrease. When she finds a guru in India who helps her find a sense of inner peace through meditation, however, stability would increase. Having the protagonist go out and buy a turkey sandwich would not do anything to stability, unless of course the character is a staunch vegetarian.

This way of looking at story allows me to make sure that everything I put into a story stays cohesive and easily digestible by an audience. Even more significantly, the entire structure of a story is dependent upon how the primary Story Value moves. The crisis of the story comes when all hope is lost, and our protagonist will never find stability again. Genre is informed by structure, structure is informed by content, and content is summarized by the primary Story Value. Songs are placed in the highest fluctuations of the primary Story Value. For me, having a primary Story Value is the most important factor toward telling an effective story. I work from the core outward. I base all decisions on the spine of the story. Musical genre, song structure,

instrumentation, and everything else like that are cosmetic decisions that come after an understanding of the story.

We went into initial meetings for this show in June of 2017. At this point in my own process, I was trying on different primary Story Values to see how they fit the original text. While I knew that not everyone would share my exact methodology, I was looking forward to getting into the room with people to talk about what the core of the story is. The content of the meetings, however, baffled me. One day we would talk about what sort of flower the play was like. The next day, we would entertain the idea of putting the entire play underwater. On another day, we would listen to electronic disco music and all sort of agree that it was appropriate for the story.

The director often worked with this sort of vocabulary, and it was very confusing for all involved. The other participants of the meeting, however, were designers. There is no mistaking that their understanding of the story is very important to a successful production, but while their job was to interpret the play, my job was to create new parts of it. I was sitting there at a complete loss as to how to respond. I was being asked to answer questions like, “How many songs will there be?” “Will actors play instruments?” and “What style of music are we going with?” Meanwhile, I was still unsure as to whether or not the play was going to be staged in post-apocalyptic underwater housing. I left each meeting knowing that I was very far from having enough information to even start writing. I had deadlines I was not equipped to meet whatsoever.

These meetings were a room full of people whom I wanted to impress. I wanted very badly for everyone to think that I was agreeable, willing to adapt, and capable of doing just about

anything. Instead of staying adamant that I needed to stick with my own process, I entertained the thought of changing my process to meet the show. What if I threw caution to the wind and became just as irreverent in my methods as the production was challenging me to be? I was drawing a blank as to what the story was about. In hindsight, no one knew at that point. The best I could do was put something onto the canvas and hope that everyone would meet me in the outfield.

To start, the production was to take place in the year 2069. I received the direction to write the music of the future. The research playlists I amassed featured music from the likes of Anderson .Paak, Tune-Yards, Nicki Minaj, and Kendrick Lamar, but I stretched my breadth of reference as far as Talking Heads, Curtis Mayfield, Beastie Boys, some prominent West African guitarists, a Bulgarian Women's Choir, mariachi bands, and the soundtracks of Quentin Tarantino. I figured if the production was going to be that far out there, I would only hinder it if I stayed in my own comfort zone.

At first, I was determined to craft my lyrics from my own translation of the original Greek. I have taken two semesters of Attic Greek, and I was excited to have the opportunity to make use of it. I imagined a version of the play where I would somehow be able to preserve a lot of the original wordplay, yet make it make sense in a modern pop music vernacular. There were so many outdated references modern audiences would not understand, and I thought it would do something very interesting to the resulting language of the piece if I could just figure out how to do it. I thought that since we were adapting a classic text, we should treat it with a certain amount of respect. As time went on, I realized what we were doing was so far from the original *Lysistrata* that it would serve me to release all connection to the source material.

Results

The songs from this production ranged from very effective to barely passable. In this section, I will outline my objectives on a few of the songs from the show, and assess where I succeeded and where there was room for improvement.

The Opening Number. The opening of any musical needs to communicate what world we are in, who our protagonist is, some idea of what they want, some idea of what they are up against, and what sort of show we should expect to see for the next hour or two. I knew there would be a long sequence of army stuff, which would take care of understanding the world of the play. The men should be given something at the beginning that lets us know that they are despicable, unaware, and immensely powerful. The women should be given something to contrast the men. If it was contrasting enough, I thought, the audience would have no choice but to love the women, as they have been driven so forcefully to hate the men. It should end with the women pursuing a chance at power, which clarifies the objective of the protagonist, then the men completely dismissing them, which illustrates, in a microcosm, what to expect from the rest of the play. It bears mentioning that at this point, I had honed in on “Understanding” as my primary Story Value.

The biggest highlight I still look back on with pride is how I treated the men lyrically. Here is their section:

“AAAAA.

AAAAA.

AAAAA.

We are

The strongest muscle men

The gods ever created!

We make the decisions

For all the world!

Little do they know,

I have the biggest dick

of all of them.

We are

The strongest muscle men

The gods ever created!

AAAAA.

AAAAA.”

To start, the men have a lyric that does not even consist of words, that I decided to set to a three part harmony with all three parts a whole step away from one another. This note, the first

sung note of the show, is intended to convey toxic masculine destruction due to a lack of *understanding*, our primary Story Value we are to track for the rest of the show. Their lyric contains no discernible rhyme, and it is set to very unflattering music. This is one of the better examples of content determining form in this show. Aside from how low it fit in their voices, the opening section of lyrics was largely successful.

The women's part, I regret to say, was nowhere near as successful. While the music was haunting, delicate, sensitive, one might even say "*understanding*," it is difficult to understand why they say some of the phrases they do. If the men are to be established as inarticulate bumbles with no sense of tact, the women must have an artfully crafted lyric that nears perfection. They are given a solid B minus. It starts off well enough:

“For thousands of years,
 You have ruled the world.
 For thousands of years,
 You have vainly hurled your

 Own insecurities
 On all of humanity,
 And left women in the dirt.
 You’ve left women cruelly hurt.”

As the song wears on, the lyric progresses steadily downhill. The women are given phrases such as “We’ve been full of scorn,” which is not a phrase that people believably say, and

they are forced to sing it to rhyme “Wailed and mourned,” which is not a perfect rhyme. In a song that is trying to display their ability to articulate, keeping the rhymes as classically pleasing as possible would have served me well. Later in the song, they sing the line, “Why not give us a try?” as a way of demanding the men relinquish their power. I would wince every night when that lyric was coming up in the song. These articulate, understanding women could only come up with “Why not give us a try?” Are to believe that a line so passive and dismissive is to serve as the backbone of our protagonist’s main desire for the rest of the play? Is that all they could come up with? In truth, that is all their writer could come up with in the few months he had to write eight songs.

My last point of concern about this song stands for a much larger misgiving I have about the project as a whole. At the end of an important section of the song, the women sing the lyric “We’re sensitive, that’s what makes us strong.” This was another lyric that made me uncomfortable as I heard it being sung back at me. It always struck me as a lyric that only a man would write. By emphasizing how sensitive they are, I was trying to make a point of setting up the primary Story Value of “Understanding.” While that accomplished what it needed to accomplish, it also betrayed a nuanced understanding of the value of women in fiction today. Why should women only be confined to roles where they are seen as nurturing and maternal? Does a lyric like the one in question limit the agency of women in the piece? Or is the larger concern that Aristophanes wrote the piece as a satire of women to begin with? Is it the job of a male writer to try to reclaim this story for women? Our male director did not make a point of bringing this up, so I took my loss quietly, cringed when the line came up, and spoke to no one about it. It irks me to this day.

The Horny Lament. This song sticks out to me because it got the most laughs out of anything I wrote for the show. I think its effect was due to how simple it was; the song consisted of these men expressing how horny they are. The director of the play began to refer to this song as “The Funeral of the Penis.” I am proud of this song because I let a simple song stay simple. As a writer who values complicated cerebral storytelling, I get very pleased with myself when I can get out of my own way. In the midst of feeling insecure about my lack of understanding of the purpose of the story, I let it stay fun. It was important for me to acknowledge that I will not always have all the answers to why every song works, and sometimes a song being enjoyable is reason enough for its inclusion in a piece.

I See Me in You. The finale of a show typically needs to leave the audience feeling the same way as the protagonist. In the case of this show, the protagonistic force is elated that they were able to get the men to stop making war. What I also wanted to drive home in this song is that the women’s ability to *understand* the men was what got them to be able to win peace. Furthermore, the men only give peace a chance because they begin to *understand* where the women are coming from. It is a piece about empathy, forgiveness, celebration, and finally, the purpose of theatre. After the two teams repeat the lyric “I see me in you,” to one another for the entire course of the song, they address the audience, singing a final, “We see you in us.” Though this was a raunchy comedy, I still agree with that final decision. The last line justifies why an audience should have sat through what they sat through.

This song is an accurate example of many of the problems with the music and lyrics in the show. The music, while fun and upbeat, does not deliver a simple hook that the audience can easily get stuck in their heads. The melodic lines do not sit well in the voices of the performers,

and there are sections that contain sustained notes that are almost unsingable *without* the actors dancing while delivering them. Practicality and stagecraft are not my strong suit just yet.

The lyrics suffer from the same degree of sloppiness. In the first lyric, the women use the phrase “attacks and defenses,” in order to rhyme with “senses.” It was hard to act happy onstage while this line was being sung. The hook repeatedly rhymed “better” with “forever,” which is barely even a near rhyme. Ideally, the quality of the rhymes of a show should get better as the show wages on. All I could do was hope that the actors were not pronouncing the lyrics clearly so that no one would understand them. In final couplet of the entire show reads, “And while there’s still more to discuss, we see you in us.” There is something about the word “discuss” that, when placed in a rhyming couplet to end a show, cuts back the fun dancy quality of the show. The excitement of the show took a significant dip to my ear every time we reached that line.

Conclusions

It is very easy for a writer to continuously tread the same ground for years, churning out the works everyone expects them to make. When one writes using the same processes repeatedly, it follows logically that they are limiting what they are capable of creating. The traditional model of musical theatre writing enables a writer to make a piece that is neat, well-structured, and free from glaring errors. For all intents and purposes, this model exists for a reason and it would serve most writers to continue to follow it. What it does *not* immediately provide, however, is opportunities for a writer to reinvent their approach. If more writers were to spend more time reinventing how they approach work, the nature of their work would change. Their own oeuvre would expand to aesthetic breadth that they never thought possible.

According to the way I typically assess the quality of my own work, the songs from this production fall very far from being effective songs for theatre. Many are written outside of the performers' vocal ranges, the thoughts expressed by characters are not rooted in believable truth, and the lyrics strain to fit the meter and rhyme schemes. A process like this one does not serve to allow a writer to perfect their craft in a conventional way. There will be plenty of glaring errors to keep a project back from perfection, but a struggle for perfection has its time and place. I am not sure where that time or place is, but it is certainly very far away from a collaborative musical theatre writing process. A process like this prompted me to make music I would have never dreamed of otherwise. The biggest mistake the production made was that it was not a workshop. It was slated as the end of the journey as a piece, rather than the beginning. Though I am doubtful that I am the right person to work on a future iteration of it, the broad strokes have been made. Now it is a matter of refining.

The challenges that come with a collaborative process force the artist to set their own ego aside for the good of the piece. My driving force to make this piece work was not my own selfish desire to be accepted by people. Instead, I was driven by the cast of dear friends of mine who would be tasked with singing these songs many nights in a row. My entire process was shaken to its core, and I am better for it. I am typically determined to tie a neat bow around everything I make, which is an urge that has left my work confined by my own standards. While I value knowledge, logic, order, and structure, the best facets of my contribution to this production were the direct results of encountering the unknown.

Appendix

The Full Lyric of the Show

1 - PROLOGUE**MEN'S CHORUS**

AAAAA.

AAAAA.

AAAAA.

WE ARE

THE STRONGEST MUSCLE-MEN

THE GODS EVER CREATED.

WE MAKE THE DECISIONS

FOR ALL THE WORLD!

(A secret.)

LITTLE DO THEY KNOW,

I HAVE THE BIGGEST DICK

OF ALL OF THEM.

WE ARE

THE STRONGEST MUSCLE-MEN

THE GODS EVER CREATED.

AAAAA.

AAAAA.

The women's chorus enters, unnoticed.

AAAAA.

The women's chorus clears their throats, the men see them.

WOMEN'S CHORUS

FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS,

YOU HAVE RULED THE WORLD

FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS,

YOU HAVE VAINLY HURLED YOUR

OWN INSECURITIES

ON ALL OF HUMANITY,
AND LEFT WOMEN IN THE DIRT -
YOU'VE LEFT WOMEN CRUELLY HURT.

FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS
WE'VE BEEN FULL OF SCORN,
FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS,
WE HAVE WAILED AND MOURNED THE
WAY YOU WREAK HAVOC
ON ALL OF THE PLANET,
WE'VE WATCHED OUR CHILDREN CRY.
SO WHY NOT GIVE US A TRY?

YOU THINK WE'RE WEAK, AND THAT'S WHERE YOU'RE WRONG,
WE'RE SENSITIVE, THAT'S WHAT MAKES US STRONG.
SO DO THE RIGHT THING PLEASE AND LET US IN
AND A GOLDEN AGE OF PEACE COULD BEGIN.

MEN'S CHORUS

AAAAA.
AAAAA.
AAAAA.

They exit to stunned silence.

2 - THE OATH

LYSISTRATA

THERE'S NOT A DICK IN ALL THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD
THAT I'LL LET COME AROUND ME OR INSIDE ME.

Sing it!

OTHERS

(Hesitant, ad lib)

THERE'S NOT A DICK IN ALL THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD
THAT I'LL LET COME AROUND ME OR INSIDE ME.

LYSISTRATA

THERE'S NOT A DICK IN ALL THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD
THAT I'LL LET COME AROUND ME OR INSIDE ME.

Come on!

OTHERS

(Less hesitant, ad lib)

THERE'S NOT A DICK IN ALL THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD
THAT I'LL LET COME AROUND ME OR INSIDE ME.

LYSISTRATA

I'LL SIT AT HOME ALL DAY, WITHOUT THE 'D,'

OTHERS

I'LL SIT AT HOME ALL DAY, WITHOUT THE 'D,'

LYSISTRATA

MY FACE MADE UP, BUT WEARING NOT MUCH ELSE.

OTHERS

MY FACE MADE UP, BUT WEARING NOT MUCH ELSE.

LYSISTRATA

SO AS TO SET MY MAN'S DESIRE ON FIRE,

OTHERS

SO AS TO SET MY MAN'S DESIRE ON FIRE,

LYSISTRATA

BUT I WILL NOT CONSENT TO WHAT HE WANTS!

OTHERS

(More passionately)

BUT I WILL NOT CONSENT TO WHAT HE WANTS!

One of the women suddenly breaks into a spirited riff.

WOMAN

NOO-OO-OO-OO!

LYSISTRATA

AND IF HE FORCES ME AGAINST MY WILL,

OTHERS

AND IF HER FORCES ME AGAINST MY WILL,

LYSISTRATA

I'LL LIE THERE, LIKE A CORPSE, COMPLETELY STILL.

OTHERS

I'LL LIE THERE, LIKE A CORPSE, COMPLETELY STILL.

LYSISTRATA

HE WON'T GET MY LEGS ABOVE MY HEAD,

OTHERS

HE WON'T GET MY LEGS ABOVE MY HEAD,

LYSISTRATA

AS LONG AS HE IS KILLING PEOPLE DEAD!

OTHERS

AS LONG AS HE IS KILLING PEOPLE DEAD!

ALL

THERE'S NOT A DICK IN ALL THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD
THAT I'LL LET COME AROUND ME OR INSIDE ME.
THERE'S NOT A DICK IN ALL THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD
THAT I'LL LET COME AROUND ME OR INSIDE ME.

I'LL SIT AT HOME ALL DAY WITHOUT THE "D"
MY FACE MADE UP BUT WEARING NOT MUCH ELSE
SO AS TO SET MY MAN'S DESIRE ON FIRE
BUT I WILL NOT CONSENT TO WHAT HE WANTS

ALL

TO SEAL THESE VOWS, I DRINK UP FROM THIS BOWL.
IF I TRANSGRESS, LET DARKNESS FILL MY SOUL.

They take turns drinking from the bowl. As their movement and music builds to a climax.

3 - SHOWDOWN II

WOMEN'S CHORUS

AAAAA.

WE ARE THE BRAVEST WOMEN
THE GODS EVER CREATED.
WE'RE NOT GONNA LAY BACK
AND GET FUCKED ANYMORE.

LITTLE DO THEY KNOW,
WE HAVE BIGGER BALLS THAN ALL OF THEM.
WE ARE THE BRAVEST WOMEN
THE GODS EVER CREATED.

The women approach the men.

AAAAA.

The women are nose-to-nose with the men.

Beat.

MEN'S CHORUS

HAHAHA.
HAHAHA.
HAHAHA.

Members of the Women's Chorus punch members of the Men's Chorus.

They are shocked and begin to sob.

MEN'S CHORUS LEADER

YOU THINK WE CAN'T HIT THEM?
I DISAGREE.

YOU THINK WE CAN'T HIT THEM?
WAKE UP AND SEE THEY'RE

NOT EVEN WOMEN,
THEY'RE MORE LIKE CRIMINALS
WHO BETRAY THEIR NATURAL PLACE.

YOU BETRAY OUR ENTIRE RACE!

The men, agreeing, assume half-hearted fighting stances.

The women come at them with animal force.

Some men find fits of rage, but most stay unsure that they should even be fighting.

Their lack of confidence leads them to lose.

4 - SHOWDOWN III

The Men's Chorus enters with torches in hand.

MEN'S CHORUS

AAAAA.
WE MADE
THE WHOLE WORLD HAPPEN
AND THIS IS HOW THEY THANK US?

WOMEN'S CHORUS

GODDESS GIVE US STRENGTH

MEN'S CHORUS

WE MAKE THE DECISIONS FOR ALL THE WORLD!

WOMEN'S CHORUS

WARD THEM OFF FOREVER

MEN'S CHORUS

THIS IS JUST THEM SHOWING THEY WANT US SO BADLY.

WOMEN'S CHORUS

WE DON'T WANT THEM NOW

MEN'S CHORUS

WE MADE
THE WHOLE WORLD HAPPEN
AND THIS IS HOW YOU THANK US?

MEN'S CHORUS

WE NEVER THOUGHT
IT WOULD COME TO THIS:
WOMEN IN THE ACROPOLIS?

WOMEN'S CHORUS

I'M GLAD IT'S FINALLY
COME TO THIS:
WOMEN IN THE ACROPOLIS!

MEN

LADIES, GO HOME, THERE ARE DISHES TO DO,

WOMEN

DO YOU REALLY THINK WE'LL ANSWER TO THE LIKES OF YOU?

MEN

YOU'RE CUTE WHEN YOU'RE ANGRY, WE ALL CAN ADMIT.

WOMEN

ARE WE CUTE ENOUGH TO GET A MAN A LITTLE MORE FIT?

MEN

WE'RE ALL PLENTY STRONG, WE CAN GIVE YOU MORE PROOF.

WOMEN

WE'VE SEEN YOU IN BED, WE ALL KNOW THE TRUTH.

MEN

THIS ISN'T YOUR PLACE! GET BACK IN THE KITCHEN!

WOMEN

CAN'T YOU GET A LITTLE MORE CREATIVE WITH YOUR BITCHING?

MEN

THIS IS OUR FAULT FOR NOT KEEPING YOU QUIET!

WOMEN

YOU KEPT US TIED DOWN, WE HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO RIOT!

MEN

WE'VE RULED THE WORLD SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN

WOMEN

IS IT TRIGGERING TO SEE POWER NOT HELD BY A MAN?

The biggest showdown we've seen so far! The men dare to burn down the Acropolis door, but the women throw water on their torches! When the fighting reaches its peak and all but one torch is extinguished, a comically huge phallic missile is revealed, pointed directly at the Acropolis door! As the sole torch-bearer begins to lower his torch onto the missile, the Women's Chorus Leaders remove their flags from the door.

5 - THE HORNY LAMENT

CINESIAS

OH, WOE!

WHOM SHALL I SCREW?

OH, WOE!

WHOM SHALL I SCREW?

I DREAM THE WHOLE NIGHT THROUGH

OF MAYBE TOUCHING YOU,

BUT WOE!

WHOM SHALL I SCREW?

MEN'S CHORUS

OH, WOE!

WHOM SHALL I SCREW?

OH, WOE!

WHOM SHALL I SCREW?

I DREAM THE WHOLE NIGHT LONG

OF SOMEONE ON MY DONG,

BUT WOE,

WHOM SHALL I SCREW?

CINESIAS

Oh, woe! Whom shall I screw?
 The loveliest one is gone. Who'll take this orphan on?
 I need a pimp! Hey, you— Go hire me a nanny for my dong.

AUSTIN

Misery, woe on woe!

ZANE

Lo, I brim over with compassion:

ZANDER

You're foully swindled of your ration!

MILES

Forsooth, your guts are going to blow!

JASON

How will your nuts remain
 Intact? Will you not go insane?

QUINN

Your manly parts are out of luck
 Without their regular morning fuck.

MEN'S CHORUS

OH, WOE!
 WHOM SHALL I SCREW?
 OH, WOE!
 WHOM SHALL I SCREW?

I DREAM THE WHOLE NIGHT LONG
 OF SOMEONE ON MY DONG
 BUT WOE
 WHOM SHALL I SCREW?

6 - THE ATONEMENT

MEN

I CAN'T PHRASE MY FEELINGS RIGHT

BUT I WANT TO COME BACK HOME.
THERE'S NO POINT KEEPING UP THIS FIGHT,
I DON'T WANT TO BE ALONE.

YOU'RE MAKING A FACE AT ME,
LIKE YOU DON'T APPROVE MY TONE.
WELL, I'M NOT EQUIPPED TO TALK ABOUT IT,
BUT PLEASE LET ME COME HOME.

WOMEN

YOU THINK IF YOU JUST KNOCK,
WE'LL OPEN UP THE DOOR?
YOU'VE SHOWN US SO MUCH HATE
WHO SAYS WE WON'T SEE MORE?

WHAT CAN YOU DO FOR US
TO SETTLE UP THE SCORE?
CAN YOU ALL SIGN THIS NOW,
TO SAY YOU'LL STOP THE WAR?

The men try to ignore the treaty being presented to them.

MEN

I CAN'T PHRASE MY FEELINGS
RIGHT
BUT I WANT TO COME BACK HOME.
THERE'S NO POINT KEEPING UP THIS
FIGHT,
I DON'T WANT TO BE ALONE.
YOU'RE MAKING A FACE AT ME,
LIKE YOU DON'T APPROVE MY
TONE.
WELL, I'M NOT EQUIPPED TO TALK
ABOUT IT,
BUT PLEASE LET ME COME HOME.

WOMEN

YOU THINK IF YOU JUST KNOCK,
WE'LL OPEN UP THE DOOR?
YOU'VE SHOWN US SO MUCH HATE
WHO SAYS WE WON'T SEE MORE?
WHAT CAN YOU DO FOR US
TO SETTLE UP THE SCORE?
CAN YOU ALL SIGN THIS NOW, *
SAY YOU'LL STOP THE WAR?

WOMEN

I'M SO GLAD
YOU FINALLY CAME TO YOUR SENSES.
THERE'S MORE TO LIFE
THAN ATTACKS AND DEFENSES.

AND WHILE THERE'S STILL MUCH MORE WE NEED TO DO,
I SEE ME IN YOU.
I SEE ME IN YOU.

SO WE CAN
DANCE LIKE THERE'S HOPE FOR US,
DANCE LIKE WE'RE NOT DOOMED TO DISAGREE,
DANCE LIKE SOMEDAY WE'LL MAKE IT BETTER,
AND WE CAN DANCE LIKE WE WON'T FIGHT FOREVER.

MEN

I'M BETTER OFF
SINCE YOU TURNED ME AROUND.
THOUGH I WAS LOST,
NOW I'M FINALLY FOUND.

NOW FOR A SECOND, WE'RE ALL SET FREE,
AND I SEE YOU IN ME.
I SEE YOU IN ME.

ALL

SO WE CAN
DANCE LIKE THERE'S HOPE FOR US,
DANCE LIKE WE'RE NOT DOOMED TO DISAGREE,
DANCE LIKE SOMEDAY WE'LL MAKE IT BETTER,
AND WE CAN DANCE LIKE WE WON'T FIGHT FOREVER.

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MEN

PRETTY SOON WE'LL ALL RETURN TO DUST

WOMEN

WE'LL SPEND THE REST OF TIME BUILDING TRUST,

MEN

WE'LL FIND SOME BEAUTY WHERE THERE WAS DISTRUST –

WOMEN

WE'LL DO IT ALL WITHOUT EXPLOITING LUST

ALL

AND WHILE THEY'RE STILL MORE TO DISCUSS,
WE SEE YOU IN US.

